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**METROPOLIS**

February 2016

Japan's N°1 English Magazine

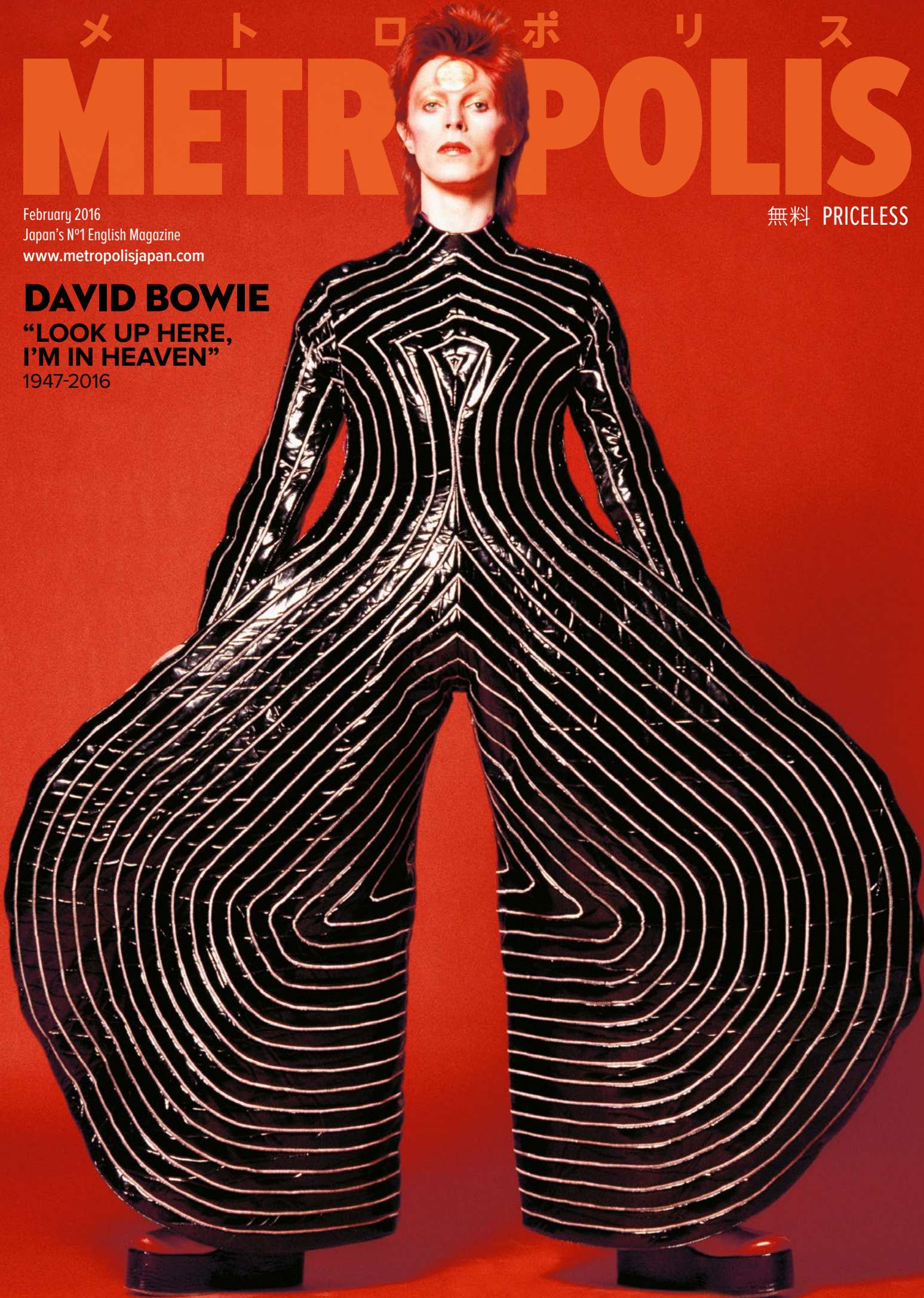
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**Bowie:** Remembering the late pop icon



Photo: Andrew Nathan (FoodPleat)

**The Iron Fairies:** Cocktails and pixie dust in Ginza



Photo: Linus Schmitt

**Ninja School:** Learn the enigmatic art of ninjutsu

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## IN FOCUS

Shark and Ray Scramble at ocean depth of 20 meters in Chiba, Tateyama, by Martin Voeller



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METROPOLIS IS JAPAN'S NO.1 ENGLISH MAGAZINE, FOUNDED IN 1994 AND PUBLISHED FOR JAPAN'S INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

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# TO-DO LIST

Check full event listings in the WATCHLIST online!  
<http://metropolisjapan.com/watchlist>

Photo: OSA Images Costumes: Kym Barrett © 2010 Cirque du Soleil



## FEB 3-JUN 26 EDITOR'S PICK

### CIRQUE DU SOLEIL: TOTEM

Montreal's theatrical supertroupe Cirque du Soleil returns to Japan with *Totem*. Originally premiered in 2010, this successful touring show—which has so far attracted as many as four million spectators worldwide—stages the epic journey of humankind's evolution across hundreds of millions of years, from its inception to the future, set to rhythms that draw upon Native American music, Spanish flamenco, and Indian music. Inspired by the many origin myths than run through human civilization, the show is performed by the company's well-oiled, gravity-defying multinational acrobats. This extravagantly entertaining production, which won the New York Drama Desk Award for Unique Theatrical Experience in 2013, incorporates cutting-edge technology such as projection mapping. Directed by Canada's maverick theatrical talent Robert Lepage. **Feb 3-Jun 26, various times, weekdays ¥6,500-12,500, weekends & hols ¥7,500-13,500.** Odaiba Big Top. 有明 Daiba and Tokyo Teleport. <http://totem-jp.com>



## FEB 24, 25 & 27 DIANA KRALL

From Joni Mitchell to Alanis Morissette, Canada is a fertile ground for producing seriously popular, high-quality female artists. One such artist is Diana Krall, the peerless jazz pianist and singstress hailing from Nanaimo, British Columbia. The de facto face of contemporary jazz since the late 1990s, Krall is famed for her sultry and sensual renderings of jazz standards. The Tokyo leg of her Wallflower World Tour—named after her latest album of pop cover songs—will be the multi-Grammy Award-winner's first appearance on this side of the world in well over a decade. **Feb 24 & 25: 7pm, sold-out. Showa Women's University Hitomi Memorial Hall. 有明 Sangenjaya. Feb 27: 5pm, ¥14,000-15,000.** Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre. 有明 Ikebukuro. Tel: 03-3402-5999. [www.udo.jp/Artists/DianaKrall](http://www.udo.jp/Artists/DianaKrall)

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## FEB 5-14 CHANTAL AKERMAN

In terms of art-house cinema, the Institut Français' Espace Images is Tokyo's best-kept secret: it is the only theater in town to regularly screen francophone and European art films with English subtitles. In collaboration with the influential Paris-based film journal *Cahiers du cinéma*, the Institut will mount a retrospective on the late Chantal Akerman, Belgium's great post-New Wave cineaste who tragically passed away last October, aged 65. Out of 16 films, eight will be screened with English subs, including a pair of early masterpieces from the '70s: *Ju, tu, il, elle* and *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna*, as well as her landmark feminist film *Jeanne Dielman* (pictured). Her later documentary *From the Other Side*, shot on the U.S.-Mexican border, is also on the program. A timely retrospective on the filmmaker *The New York Times* describes in its obituary as "a pioneer in feminist and experimental filmmaking." Highly recommended. **Feb 5-14, various times, ¥1,200.** Institut Français du Japon. 有明 Iidabashi. Tel: 03-5206-2500. <http://meturl.com/4q>

© TokyoFashion.com



## FEB 28 YOYOGI PARK FLEA MARKET

Founded in 1981, this is Tokyo's biggest flea market, or *furima* as the Japanese like to call it, and probably the hippest as well. With the participation of as many as 800 vendors, it's your best bet when hunting down vintage clothes in the city. Its close proximity to the fashion meccas of Harajuku and Shibuya makes Yoyogi Park's open-air bazaar a magnet for fashionistas seeking rare designer items, locals bargaining for knockoffs, and tourists seeking souvenirs and curious merchandise to take back home. This is a perfect place to spend your Sunday afternoon browsing for that hidden gem, and you might even see some familiar faces from magazines selling off their threads. (Note: The event may be canceled in the event of bad weather.) **Feb 28, 10am-3pm, free.** Yoyogi Park. 有明 Harajuku. Tel: 04-7145-1830. [www.jinsei-geki.com/rec](http://www.jinsei-geki.com/rec)



## FEB 6-14 TPAM

Once called Tokyo Performing Arts Market but now confusingly retitled Performing Arts Meeting in Yokohama, TPAM is Japan's biggest contemporary dance and theater exchange. Though targeted at professionals, the event includes an extensive showcase program serving up a buffet of experimental performances. Among the companies to appear are venerable *butoh* dance group Dairakudakan, Thailand's Pichet Klunchun, and the duo of Daniel Kok (Singapore) and Luke George (Melbourne). The latter will stage *Bunny* (pictured), a performance that utilizes macramé, sailors' knots, Chinese knots, and rope bondage to weave together an "interactive experience of collectivity." Altogether the event comprises six tracks: TPAM Co-Production; Contemporary Classics; Direction; Showcase; Exchange; and Meeting Program. **Feb 6-14, various times, ¥1,000-3,000.** Kanagawa Arts Theatre. 有明 Nihon-ōdori and Motomachi-Chūkagai. Tel: 045-633-6500. [www.tpam.or.jp/2016/en](http://www.tpam.or.jp/2016/en) Dan Grunebaum

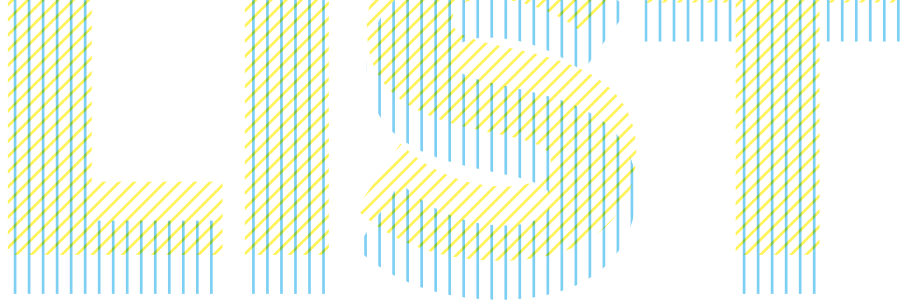
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## FEB 25-28 THE LANGUAGE ARCHIVE

Tokyo International Players is once again on the leading edge of theater in Tokyo. This month, they are producing *The Language Archive* by acclaimed Asian-American playwright Julia Cho. Written seven years ago, the play snared Cho the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and received great notices on its opening in California in 2010. Focusing on how we use language, the work is touching, humorous, and thought-provoking all at once. Director Brian Berdanier told *Metropolis*, "I'm a huge fan of Julia Cho's writing and have been in love with this script since I first read it nearly five years ago. It deals with universal themes such as love, hope, communication ... but with a unique mixture of humor and melancholy that I find magical." **Feb 25-26, 7pm; Feb 27, 1pm & 7pm; Feb 28, 3pm. ¥3,800 (adv)/ ¥4,500 (door).** The Pocket. 有明 Nakano. <http://meturl.com/languagearchive> Rob Schwartz





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Jananne AL-ANI, *Groundworks III*, 2013



## FEB 11-20 YEBISU FESTIVAL

Now in its eighth year, Yebisu Festival, which takes place in and around Yebisu Garden Place, is fast becoming one of Japan's most important festivals for contemporary art and moving images. This year the festival takes up French philosopher Gilles Clément's concept of "Garden in Movement" to explore a "new look at contemporary society as a garden that changes day by day." Works include installations by Iraqi-born U.K. artist Jananne Al-Ani and Malaysia's Chris Chong Chan Fui—who will each give a lecture at the Garden Hall—while Japan's pioneering video artist Fujiko Nakaya will stage her "fog sculpture." Experimental cinema is represented by *No Home Movie*, the last completed work by Belgium's great feminist filmmaker Chantal Akerman—who passed away last October—and *France is Our Mother Country* by Cambodian-French documentarist Rithy Panh (both screened with English subtitles). **Feb 11-20, 10am-8pm, ¥350-1,500 (adv)/ ¥600-2,000 (door).** Yebisu Garden Place. [www.yebizoo.com](http://www.yebizoo.com) Ebisu. Tel: 0570-021-170.

## FEB 19 SOPHIE

The mysterious electronic producer behind the moniker Sophie has been making significant waves in the past year, producing tracks for the likes of Madonna and the queen of J-pop Namie Amuro. In 2014, the British producer (whose real name is Samuel Long) collaborated with current ambassador of *kawaii*, Kyary Pamyu Pamyu. Essentially a conceptual art project masked as a series of instantly catchy, rapid-fire pop and dance tunes delivered in high-pitched female vocals, Sophie released his first album, *Product*, just last year on the U.K.'s PC Music label. The album consists of four previously-released tracks (known as the Numbers singles) and four new ones. At Circus' all-nighter party, the capital's newest addition to the underground clubbing scene, Tokyoites will have the chance to experience the unveiling of one of electronic music's hottest new properties. **Feb 19, 11pm, ¥3,500 (adv).** Circus Tokyo. Tel: 03-6419-7520. <http://circus-tokyo.jp/en/events/sophie>

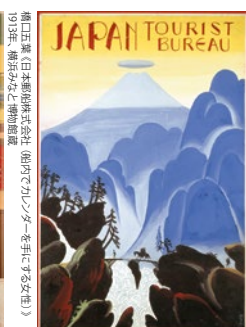


© Daido Moriyama



## UNTIL FEB 20 DAIDO MORIYAMA

Active since the mid-1960s, Daido Moriyama is a pioneer in high-contrast black-and-white street photography, whose expressive point-and-shoot aesthetics had an enormous influence on generations of photographers to come. Japan's greatest living photographer alongside Nobuyoshi Araki, Moriyama is held in the highest regard by the international art community. Known for his grainy and nocturnal monochrome works often photographed *in situ* on the gritty back alleys of Shinjuku, his instantly recognizable—if impossible to replicate—photographs are staunchly anti-commercial. His latest exhibition features some of his seminal masterpieces, such as the 1981 study of the back of a boy's shaven head (pictured), as well as more recent works taken in the previous six years. Not to be missed. **Until Feb 20, 11am-7pm (10am-7pm on weekends), ¥600.** Closed Feb 15. Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre. <http://daidomoriyamaexhi.tumblr.com/english> Tel: 03-5391-2111.



日本郵船株式会社 (日本郵船株式会社) 1923年、東京国定近代美術館蔵

## UNTIL FEB 28 VISIT JAPAN

With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics only four years away and a record high 19.73 million visitors in 2015, now is a good time to look back at Japan's initial tourism campaigns. The establishment of the Japan Tourist Bureau in 1912, plus NYK Line's ocean liners and the South Manchuria Railway, helped entice tourists in the 1920s and '30s. Through 120 vintage posters, pamphlets, and other items, MOMAT's exhibition explores the role of "design" in how the nation promoted itself during the interwar years. There's also an important historical undertone to the exhibition: the country's colonial expansionism becomes discernible, as picturesque images of "Beautiful Japan" progressively make way for militarist propaganda. **Until Feb 28, 10am-5pm (until 8pm on Fri), ¥430.** Closed Mon. The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. [www.visitjapan.com](http://www.visitjapan.com) Takebashi. Tel: 03-5777-8600.

## FEB 29 BON IVER

Indie hipsters Bon Iver make their long-overdue Japan debut as part of a Far East tour that takes in dates all over Asia. Singer-songwriter Justin Vernon's band is already approaching their first decade. They made their mark with their first album *For Emma, Forever Ago*, released in 2008, and more recently claimed a 2012 Grammy Award for Best New Artist and Best Alternative Music Album for their outing *Bon Iver*, *Bon Iver*, which was recorded in a remodeled veterinarian clinic that Vernon and his brother converted into April Base Studios. The Wisconsin-born musician's intimate, pared-down songs that recall the best of the alt-folk tradition should make for the perfect soundtrack to midwinter. **Feb 29, 7pm, ¥7,500 (adv).** Studio Coast. <http://meturl.com/boniver2016> Tel: 03-5534-2525.

[Dan Grunebaum](http://dan.grunebaum.com)



Photo: Kentaro Hirao

## UNTIL APR 3 TAKASHI MURAKAMI'S SUPERFLAT COLLECTION

Takashi Murakami is arguably Japan's most popular artist, known internationally for his idiosyncratic fusion of traditional *nihonga*, anime, and pop art. The 53-year-old has a less-known side, that of an avid art collector. Coinciding with his large-scale exhibition at Mori Art Museum, Yokohama Museum of Art will unveil Murakami's wide-ranging personal collection accumulated over the years. This treasure trove reflects his eclectic taste, from artworks produced in the Edo Period by masters like Soga Shohaku to more contemporary ones, such as a sculpture by Yoshitomo Nara and a mammoth installation by Germany's Anselm Kiefer. **Until April 3, 10am-6pm, ¥1,500.** Closed Thurs (except Feb 11). Yokohama Museum of Art. <http://yokohama.art.museum/eng> Minatomirai. Tel: 045-221-0300.





# DAVID BOWIE: ARTIST, ICON, JAPANOPHILE

BY ROB SCHWARTZ

If you're interested in David Bowie, by now you've probably read the multitudes of tributes and seen all the accolades that have been heaped on him after his untimely passing on January 10 from liver cancer, at age 69.

Don't worry: I couldn't agree more with all of those singing his praises. It's hard to think of a popular artist whose musical career is as rich, as varied, and as accomplished as Bowie's. What's more, his massive contributions span so many fields and genres, from fashion, film, and performance, to gay rights and gender issues—and the list goes on. I don't believe there is any solo musical artist in the later decades of the 20th century whose output, legend,

influence, and creative energy cumulatively can compare with Bowie's. For pure iconographic power, the only solo artist who might spark debate is Michael Jackson—with Elton John, Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder, and Carlos Santana getting honorable mention. In terms of pure fame, Jackson probably outweighs Bowie; but in terms of length of career, volume, and diversity of quality output and, most importantly, influence across genres, it's all Bowie.

Being based in Japan, we have a special connection to Bowie, who had an extraordinary relationship with the country and the culture. He clearly valued the traditions and was deeply influenced by Japanese artistry.

David Bowie's creative relationship with Japan started when he studied dance in the mid-1960s with the mime artist, dancer, and choreographer Lindsay Kemp. Kemp was much influenced by kabuki theater and the *onnagata* style of men performing female roles—and Bowie absorbed the influence.

This is evident on Bowie's year-and-a-half '72-73 world tour for the albums *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* and *Aladdin Sane*. The Ziggy face paint references kabuki style, and the androgyny of *onnagata* is clear throughout the performance. Though they had yet to meet, Bowie adopted some of the clothes of designer Kansai Yamamoto, through Yamamoto's assistant Yasuko Hayashi, for the tour and the love affair with Japan was in full swing. Indeed, Bowie's lyrics in the eponymous song about the glam spaceman include the line "like some cat from Japan."

Legendary Japanese guitarist Tomoyasu Hotei notes, "As performance art, I think he was greatly impacted by kabuki theater, and this also had an influence on his fashion sense."

In 1979, Bowie would use Yamamoto to design his famous "Space Samurai" pants, which drew inspiration from traditional hakama, worn by Japanese martial artists and part of some traditional Japanese formal wear. The relationship, both in designing outfits for Bowie and a personal friendship, would last the rest of Bowie's life.

Bowie's love of Japan led him to photographer Masayuki Sukita, who would serve as one of his main cameramen throughout his career. Sukita shot the album jacket of Bowie's celebrated 1977 release *Heroes*. And then in 2012, the visual artist put out a 300-page book of Bowie photos called *Speed of Life*.







© Photo by Masayoshi Sukita, courtesy of Tomoyasu Hotei

One of Bowie's more well-known and direct collaborations with a Japanese artist is his starring turn in Nagisa Oshima's 1983 movie *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*. Something of an all-star assembly of talent, in addition to the celebrated filmmaker Oshima, the piece starred Takeshi Kitano—or "Beat Takeshi", as he is known in Japan; Ryuichi Sakamoto, who also did the score, for which he won a BAFTA; and Tom Conti. The flick premiered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival, and both director Oshima and actor Bowie, as well as Conti, were much lauded for the challenging work examining the explosive topic of British POWs in a Japanese forced labor camp in Burma.

One connection that started as Bowie influencing the Japanese artist but turned into a lifelong friendship was the relationship with Hotei. The Japanese axman began his career as a founding member of the hugely popular band Boowy. Reached for this piece, Hotei told *Metropolis*, "My eternal hero and inspiration ... David Bowie is the one who truly changed my life."

Hotei notes he first met Bowie in 1994 when he interviewed the British pop icon for Japanese TV in London. Two years later, Hotei was chosen as the opening act for

Bowie's concerts at the Nippon Budokan on The Outside Tour. He relates, "After finishing rehearsal for the first night's show, he came to my dressing room and said with a laugh, 'Hotei-san—he always called me using "san" after my name—come and play guitar as a guest during my set as well!'" Hotei performed the next night on the Bowie hit "All the Young Dudes."

"Can you even imagine the joy and amazement of playing next to David Bowie?" enthuses the Japanese master guitarist. "It literally felt as though I was rising up to heaven."

"Whenever you met him, he always gave such a dazzling smile, and he had a way of taking away any tension people might feel, and creating a softness in the air around him," says Hotei, summing up his friend. "With both a rock star aura and the calmness of a gentleman, he was a man who embodied the expression of an avant-garde artist, enveloped in true charm." And of Bowie's connection to Japan, he surmises, "He took the splendor of Japanese culture and delivered it to the world through his performance. I am so grateful to him for this."

**Rob Schwartz is Tokyo Bureau Chief of *Billboard* magazine.**

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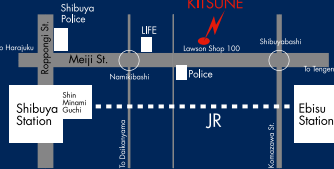


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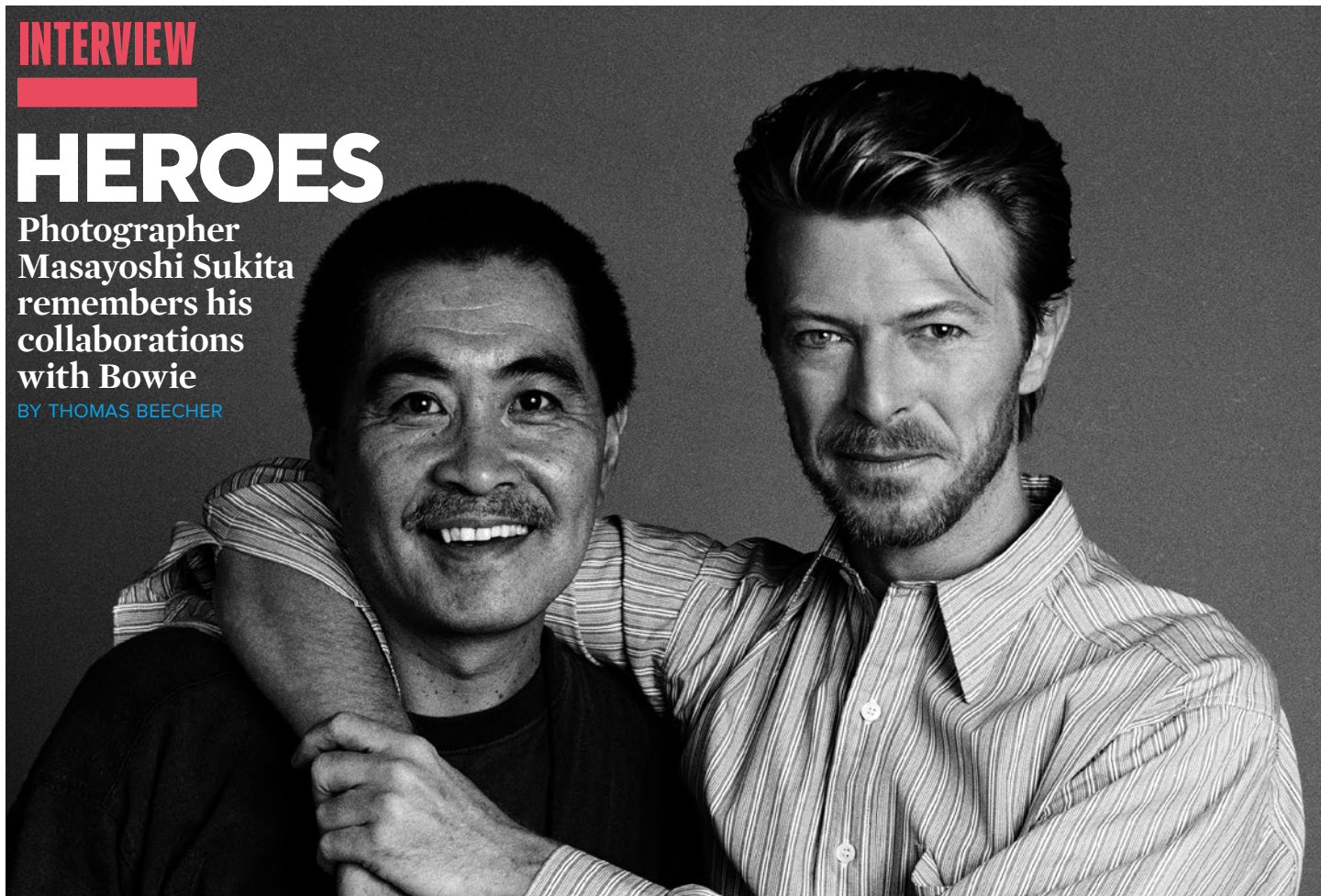
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# HEROES

Photographer  
Masayoshi Sukita  
remembers his  
collaborations  
with Bowie

BY THOMAS BEECHER



© Photo by Mark Higaishino

## How did you first come to work with David Bowie?

It was 1972 and I had traveled to London because I really wanted to photograph T.REX. At that time, I wasn't even aware David Bowie existed. After finishing the shoot with T.REX, I saw a poster of Bowie in the street and instantly became intrigued. It was black-and-white and showed him performing an impressive high kick (the photo was used on the sleeve of *The Man Who Sold the World*). I didn't realize it was a poster of a rock star. I just remember thinking "What is this?" Later I did some research and discovered it was promoting a concert for Bowie and Lou Reed. Having been inspired by this poster, I decided that I really wanted to photograph Bowie and raced to the Royal Albert Hall. Clutching my portfolio, I was just about to ask if I could work with him when he noticed my photos and thankfully agreed to do a photo session with me. That was my first achievement in London.

## You photographed Bowie for his iconic *Heroes* LP cover. Where did you get the idea for this concept?

Actually, we never intended for the photo on the cover of *Heroes* to be used on the front of the album. In 1977, David came to Japan to promote Iggy Pop's new album that he had produced. He didn't come to Japan to tour, so he actually had some free time. I asked if he would mind doing a session with me, and he agreed

to come to my Tokyo studio. I photographed Bowie for one hour and Iggy for one more. I chose 10-20 photos that I liked from that day and sent them to Berlin, where Bowie was living at the time. It was several months later when I got the call to ask for permission to use the photo on the cover for *Heroes*. He had chosen my favorite photograph from that day, so of course I agreed immediately.

## Bowie made many changes over the years as an artist, both musically and visually. How did your art change with him?

I think he definitely influenced my portrait work. In the '60s, before I photographed Bowie, I worked as a photographer for men's fashion. After taking Bowie's picture in '72, I had many opportunities to photograph him; but his performances, his fashion ... David Bowie had an amazing aura in front of the camera. Since that first session in '72, I continued to capture him on several other occasions. But to be honest, I don't think I really understood Bowie that first time. In '77, when I shot the photo for *Heroes*, I was desperate to capture his unique aura and his quick movements. My real memory of that day is watching him change his pose continuously and feeling like I had to keep taking as many photos as I could so as not to lose the moment. After that day, I took a lot of other people's portraits; but I never asked them to do this pose or that pose. I always try to capture the artist's own movements and gestures by

keenly observing their worldview. So I believe he changed the way I take photos of people.

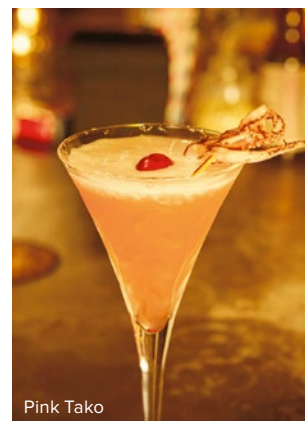
## Is there anything uniquely Japanese in your work with Bowie?

There is an instrumental piece called "Moss Garden" on the *Heroes* LP, and it is said that the song is about Saihō-ji temple in Kyoto. David loved Kyoto and had visited there many times, so I think he was inspired by his trips when he was writing that song. *Saihō* ('moss'), just like grass, takes a very long time to grow. When you go to London, you see beautiful lawns; and just like the *saihō* in Kyoto, you feel this "passing of a long time." I think David wanted to express, in his own way, the "passing of a long time" that he had felt from Saihō-ji, Kyoto, and from Eastern culture in general. The song ends with the distant sound of a jet. And when I hear that, I get this feeling that he wanted to convey his journey back to the present, after a long journey back from time itself.

## What do you think is Bowie's greatest legacy in Japan?

Since David passed away, people have truly realized his greatness. But I don't think that it is just in Japan that people felt like this. I believe that the whole world will be influenced by the legacy Bowie leaves behind. I think he has influenced me as well, but I'm not sure I can answer how his death will affect me yet. I'm still trying to come to terms with it and find the answer.





Pink Tako

Photos: Iron Fairies



Fire Smacker

BAR ¥¥¥ EN/JP

# THE IRON FAIRIES

BY ANDY HUGHES

**M**y first thought when setting foot in The Iron Fairies was that this wasn't your normal run-of-the-mill concept bar. The aesthetics and atmosphere were given serious consideration, and for anyone who is interested in fantasy, fairy tales, and mythology, it could prove reason enough to take an evening visit to Ginza. And that's not even mentioning the expertly crafted drinks, the ambience, and the stellar service.

The Iron Fairies was designed by artist and blacksmith Ashley Sutton, who's renowned for being the brains behind some famously original venues in Bangkok: Maggie Choo's, Mr. Jones' Orphanage, and Bangkok Betty. Sutton has joined forces with celebrated mixologist Carson Quinn and bar consultant Joseph Boroski to bring his

latest creation to life. They have collaborated to create something you won't likely forget.

As you enter the basement, you're transported from the familiar Ginza streets to a place more fantastical, where your imagination can run wild. Bottles of fairy dust line the walls on timeworn shelves, butterflies hover overhead in suspended animation, and blacksmith tools sit next to tiny iron fairies to give the impression that they were just recently crafted. There are 15 fairies dotted around the bar amid the jars and tools, all with their own individual stories and personalities. The friendly staff will encourage you to listen to some of these tales—perfect for those like me who enjoy the odd whimsical story every now and then.



Mixologist Carson Quinn

So you don't believe in fairies? Well, it's not all they offer. If you're searching for a bar that offers ambience, quirky design, and great music, look no further. The selection of music is a mix of ambient, jazz, and electronic, tailored to complement the atmosphere. I was particularly thankful I didn't have to shout over the music to have a conversation.

Looking at the menu, I was very impressed by the inventiveness of the cocktails. You've

heard of gourmet dining; this is gourmet drinking. The price of some drinks may seem steep at first, but once you taste them, you know you're getting what you paid for: top-quality ingredients combined by specialists who love their craft. It was tough to decide what to order for my first drink, but being a fan of anything that sounds relatively spicy, I opted for a Fire Smacker, a concoction of tequila, strawberry, lime, honey, chocolate, Himalayan salt, and *shishito* pepper. Contradictory to its name, it didn't actually taste like a smack in the mouth with

fire, but instead a very pleasant combination of flavors that made my taste buds sing a little lullaby of joy. Well, at least I thought I could hear them sing.

My next drink was a Pink Tako. It had some very creative ingredients, which may or may not include octopus. If that doesn't tickle your fancy, don't worry—there are some excellent beers, wines, and champagnes on offer, too.

It's worth mentioning that, at The Iron Fairies, there's no seat charge and no tax added to your tab at the end of the night. I can remember a few occasions when I was enjoying some drinks with friends, having a grand old time, until the tab lands and there's all sorts of unexpected charges. Not the case here: you pay for what you eat and drink, and don't have to worry about anything else. The staff are all very friendly and speak English, so this is a great place to check out if you're not so confident with your Japanese.

Sure, you can find cocktails all around Tokyo, but you'll be hard-pressed to find any as imaginative and flavorsome as these. So drop by and enjoy the inspired menu of craft cocktails, the friendly staff, and the otherworldly atmosphere of The Iron Fairies.

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# ANDREAS FUCHS

The Grand Hyatt Tokyo executive chef shares his story

BY C BRYAN JONES

**M**anaging the culinary operations of a hotel like the Grand Hyatt is a monumental task. Nearly a dozen dining venues, featuring a wide variety of cuisines, require an extraordinary level of experience and expertise to unite. In September 2015, Andreas Fuchs took over as executive chef, arriving from the Part Hyatt Shanghai. *Metropolis* caught up with the German-born artisan to learn about what led him into the culinary arts, his experience, and what he has planned for the Grand Hyatt Tokyo.

## When did you start cooking?

I first started cooking with my parents, around 11 or 12 years old. Then the desire grew to become a chef. At 16, when I finished school, I wanted to do an apprenticeship. I had an opportunity to do the apprenticeship, but three or four hours away from my home: in Austria.

## How did your family influence your cooking?

My grandfather was a baker, and he had his own bakery in Berlin. When he still practiced and he had his shop, he took my aunt and my mom [there] and they helped out. He passed a lot of talents and skills on to them. They never opened their own bakery, but they baked a lot at home and that inspired me greatly. My mom comes from Berlin, my father from Bavaria, and we lived in Stuttgart. Though Germany is normally potato-dominated, the area around Stuttgart is

pasta-dominated. So it all comes together, and every day, you had something different.

## What did you learn in France and England?

The restaurant A. Beauvilliers [in Paris] was well-established, very traditional, very conservative sometimes, but that was why I went there. I did not want to learn the modern, all the new techniques. I was really focused on what were the basics for French food. In England, I worked in a countryside pub by the sea. The food was, again, completely different. England is seafood. In Austria, and when I worked in the deep south of Germany, we had seafood, but it was more of a specialty.

## What is your philosophy today? How do you plan menus and what do you want to bring to diners?

For me, [what's] most important is to respect the restaurants we have—to keep the authenticity of every place. I look at every dish in every outlet I go, I eat it, and then I ask myself, "Would I come back?" Even a simple steak could be this. Really, when I am thinking of the dishes and planning, this is most important for me. Do I come back? Do the guests come back? And it doesn't always have to be the most "Wow!"-effect dish; it can just be the homestyle food.

## How do you take a dish that doesn't quite grab you and elevate it?

The best [thing] you can do is to ask your colleagues. Ask the people around you. They're cooking with you, they support you. Most important is listening to other people. Egos do not work out in the kitchen.

## What advice do you have for aspiring cooks?

Stick to what you like, stick to what you know. Stick to dishes that maybe your mom cooked, but then take them and make them your own. Add new ingredients, add new preparations. Don't be afraid to take risks.



RECIPE

# VENISON GOULASH

RECIPE AND PHOTO BY ANDREAS FUCHS

Servings: 4

## INGREDIENTS

- 1kg venison chuck (2-3cm)
- 250ml chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 100g pancetta
- 10pc peppercorns
- Oil
- 500ml red wine
- Salt, pepper
- 200g celery
- 100g cranberries
- 100g carrots
- Crème fraîche or sour cream

## DIRECTIONS

1. Cut the onions roughly and mix with the venison, bay leaf, peppercorns, and wine for 1-2 days.
2. Take the meat out of the wine, dry and sear off in a hot pot—big enough to hold all ingredients later—with oil until golden brown. Take out and then sear off the roughly diced celery, carrots, and pancetta until it is a nice brown color throughout. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Add the seared meat again and top with the red wine-soaked onion, the red wine, and also the chicken stock. Braise slowly for around 90 min, constantly checking so it's not burning on the bottom or the pot.
4. Once the meat is tender and cooked, check for the consistency of the sauce; it should be like liquid cream. If it's too runny, keep the Goulash on the heat and reduce further; if too thick, add some more chicken stock.
5. At the end, add half of the cranberries.
6. Serve with crème fraîche, mini pears, and the other half of the cranberries. Serve with Spätzle and garnish with thyme or rosemary.

# SPÄTZLE

## INGREDIENTS

- 250 grams flour
- 2 egg yolks
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp salt

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, mix the flour, eggs, and salt, and beat until it gives off bubbles.
2. Moisten a "Spätzlesbrett" (a wooden board with a single handle) in the boiling water. Spread a small amount of dough on it and, with a big-handled scraper, scrape thin strips of dough into slightly boiling water.
3. When the spätzle rise to the surface, remove them from the water and put them into ice water.
4. Toss them with little vegetable oil, so they don't stick together. For serving the spätzle, sauté them with butter in a pan, garnish them with butter and chives.



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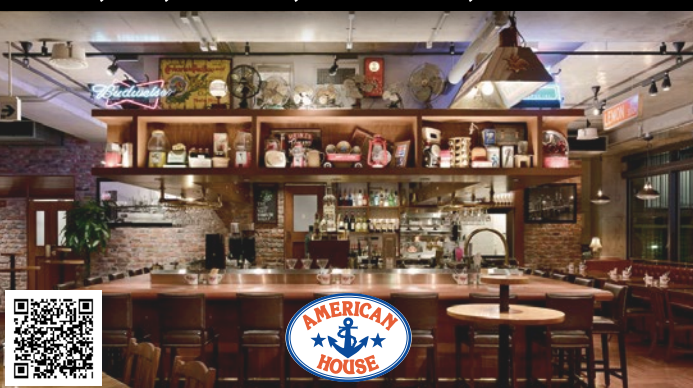
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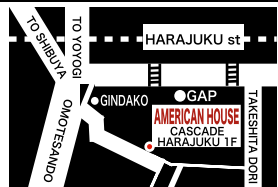
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# ADVENTURES IN LITTLE EDO

Strolling through Kawagoe's memory lanes

BY MUBITA MAMBWE

Many travelers flock to Tokyo and its picture-perfect landscape of neon and chrome, vibrant with urban activity and modern convenience. However, north of the capital lies Kawagoe in Saitama Prefecture, a portal to a bygone era that abounds with timeless Japanese charm.

Perhaps what's instantly striking upon arriving at Kawagoe is the sense of nostalgia embedded in the area's distinctive warehouse-style architecture. Although Japanese houses were typically made of wood, this former merchant town's thriving commerce allowed for the construction of low-rise buildings with grey or white clay walls and black clay roof tiles. This was done in part to protect the city from further fires, after several broke out in the 1800s and burned down Kawagoe's buildings—the most catastrophic being the Great Fire of Kawagoe in 1893, which destroyed nearly a third of the area. But once rebuilt, Kawagoe was indestructible.

## KURAZUKURI STREET

Kawagoe's vintage vibe is most abundant in Kurazukuri Street—the unofficial nickname for culturally-rich Nakacho district—which would make a visitor feel as though they've stepped into a Ghibli movie. A fifteen-minute walk north from Hon-Kawagoe Station, Kurazukuri—which translates to “building a warehouse”—comprises several blocks housing more than 200 structures in the iconic warehouse style. Many of these homes have been converted into

stores selling traditional crafts and delicacies, and the aroma of Japanese barley or green teas wafts from some of the storefronts. Many of these houses line up along the main street of this district, Taisho Roman Dori; occasionally, locals dressed in kimono and other traditional attire roam around.

## TIME AFTER TIME

Kawagoe's most iconic landmark can be found here: the Toki no Kane clock tower. As history has it, the majestic tower was built in the mid-1600s, toward the start of the Edo Period, and was rebuilt four times following several outbreaks of fire in the city. The bell, which now functions mechanically, chimes four times a day: at 6am, 12pm, 3pm, and 6pm.

## MUSEUMS

The several museums scattered around Kawagoe are comprehensive enough in documenting the city's rich history to satisfy the curious visitor.

The Yamazaki Art Museum, located by the outer edges of Nakacho, features artwork from local artists. The pieces are few but provide a quaint look at how artists viewed the world around them, and getting to see the interior of the warehouse gallery is a plus. (Adults ¥500, students ¥350; 4-13 Nakacho, Kawagoe-shi, Saitama Prefecture.)

The former residence of an Edo-era tobacco salesman, the Museum of Kurazukuri, across the street from the clock tower, delves into Kawagoe's history of fires with its display of

photos of the city's beginnings and artifacts from the fire and old-style firefighters. (Adults ¥100, students ¥50, children free; 7-9 Saiwai-cho, Kawagoe-shi, Saitama Prefecture.)

While not a museum, the Osawa House has its share of stories to tell. Built in 1792, the Osawa House is the oldest storehouse in Kawagoe and one of the few remaining storehouses from the Edo Period (1603-1868). (1-15-2 Motomachi, Kawagoe-shi, Saitama Prefecture.)

## CANDY ALLEY

For lovers of color and confectionery, the Kashiya Yokochō—or “Candy Alley”—offers treats for all the senses. Tucked away to the side of the main path, Candy Alley retains the retro vibe of the Meiji Period (1868-1912) when its first candy shop was opened, and shortly thereafter blossomed into the candy-filled backstreet it is today. Mom-and-pop candy stores line the streets selling homemade confectionery utilizing candy-making methods of yore. Toy stores are also sprinkled throughout, where guests can stop and play with Japanese tops, yo-yos, and a myriad other fun gadgetry from a simpler time.

Quiet 1960s Japan-type coffee shops are also nearby for a quick repose from wandering around.

## FESTIVAL

Kawagoe's popularity peaks every third weekend of October, when the 360-year-old Kawagoe Festival draws in tourists from around the country with its lively percussive music and accompanying dance, and massive floats ported around. Off-season, images from and information about the festival, which has become a symbol of the city, can be found at the Kawagoe Festival Museum (2-1-10 Motomachi, Kawagoe-shi, Saitama Prefecture).

## GETTING AROUND

While much of Kawagoe is accessible on foot, the most convenient mode of transport is the Koedo Loop Bus, which can be taken from Kawagoe, Hon-Kawagoe, and Kawagoe-shi Stations. The bus route goes through a majority of the popular sightseeing destinations, including those in Kurazukuri Street and other nearby sites such as Kitain Temple and Honmaru Goten. The bus comes around every 30 minutes.





  
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## THE CITY

# CHIBA'S HIDDEN TREASURES

## History by the airport

BY THOMAS BEECHER

Chiba is something of a tourism anomaly. The prefecture swarms with travelers each day, though few actually step out as they zip between Narita Airport and Tokyo. But, if you have the time and feel inclined—or if you're stuck on a layover and don't have the hours to make it to Tokyo—there is a lot to see in Chiba. And you needn't stray too far from the airport.

### NARITA

Unlike most major outlying transportation hubs, there's a lot to see around Narita beyond its runways and terminals. A short commute from the airport, the city of Narita itself packs in all the usual excitement of modern Japan, while at the same time offering a glimpse into its past.

Narita has its moment in the sun each year when millions of people flock to the ancient Naritasan Shinshō-ji temple over the New Year period to make their *hatsumode* (the first shrine visit of the year). For the rest of the year, visiting the temple is a serene experience, and you can stroll comfortably around its vast grounds and the imposing Naritasan Park that surrounds it.

The Shinshō-ji temple sits at the foot of Narita's similarly iconic Omotesando—a wonderful Edo-period shopping street that brims with souvenir shops, restaurants, and people. Narita is known for its *unagi* (freshwater eel), and there are numerous restaurants along the street that specialize in the wiggly delicacy. Among the favorites are Surugaya and Kawatoyo Honten. At Kawatoyo Honten, you become privy to the process as the chefs gut and skewer the eel in plain sight. But as with many cuisines, the process is more than justified by its outcome. The crowd-pleasing unagi bento (¥2,500) alone is reason enough to visit Narita.

©Kawatoyo



At its heart, Narita is a typical Japanese city: an intersection between new and old, with the regular slew of bars, cafés, and shops—plus the odd love hotel—assorted among a mix of Edo- and Meiji-period architecture. And, like the rest of Japan, Narita shines when it comes to food. Aside from unagi, the city is also famed for its *gyōza*. The humble Gyoza no Osho Keisei Narita Ekimae is a short distance from Narita Station and a favorite with locals. If you're visiting Japan for the first time, this is great chance to sample the beloved dumpling (¥240 for a plate of six), which you can watch being prepared in their open kitchen.

### SAKURA

Two stops from Narita, Sakura has a reputation for being a town of cherry blossoms. Each year from March to May, people flock to the area to see the superlative tree in bloom. But even if you're not around during spring, Sakura is still worth a visit.

Ten minutes by foot from Sakura Station, the ostensibly unassuming Sakura Samurai Street contains five of the few remaining samurai houses in Kanto, three of which are open to the public (admission ¥100-210). Here, you can see traditional Japanese samurai life, with collections of well-presented rooms holding quotidian artifacts from the period, such as cooking utensils and porcelain latrines.

A further 10-minute stroll leads you to the hilltop space that holds the ruins of the historic Sakura Castle—an important stronghold during



the Sengoku and Edo Periods—now an expansive parkland that's popular for cherry blossom watching. The park is also the site of the impressive National Museum of Japanese History. Regardless of the season, the park is a perfect spot to take in some typical Japanese serenity—a reasonable gift for those in the process of or approaching a grueling international haul.

### ACCESS

Express trains from Tokyo to Narita take around 90 minutes. Trains between the airport and Narita City take around 10 minutes.

Planning a trip around a layover? You might also consider the Narita Transit Program, which offers various guided tours from the airport to Narita City and surrounding areas, free of charge; tours last between two-and-a-half and three hours. Bookings can be made on the spot at either terminal after arrival at the Transit Tour Desk.

[www.narita-transit-program.jp](http://www.narita-transit-program.jp)





# THUNDER OVER NAKANO

BY SAMUEL THOMAS, FASHION EDITOR





**T**hunderbox, from designer Tsuyoshi Morita, is a surprisingly well-kept secret on the Tokyo fashion scene. Word of it spreads purely via its fans' backs across the city as fellow streetwear aficionados clock the geek-chic references and gravitate to the Thunderbox mothership. Accordingly, the recently opened flagship is named Nazo no Mise—literally, “the mystery shop”—and, in keeping with the designer's subcultural leanings, is located in Nakano over in West Tokyo, a stone's throw from the subculture mecca of Nakano Broadway.

The streetwear style Thunderbox subscribes to is in line with a lot of the hype-fuelled brands of the Harajuku backstreets. But once in the store, it's an altogether welcoming experience—even if the store staff are known to wear the Thunderbox masks that accompany each season. The masks themselves are made from various pieces of subcultural paraphernalia: for the gaming-themed collection, masks are made from old controller and Game Boy parts; and for the “mecha”-themed output, Gundam plastic model kits find themselves repurposed. This approach extends directly to the clothes themselves, wherein, like the masks, various subcultural references are dissected and arranged, always with a sense of humor, and crucially with a sense of style.

It's this all-important sense of style that separates Thunderbox from the usual geek-chic fare. Its references are kept relatively guarded but also pleasantly obscure, that only those in the know will ... well, know.

In the upcoming season, the designer's ongoing affair with retro games gets center stage. Foreign fans will be delighted to see a range of items inspired by the color scheme and lines of both Nintendo's Japanese Famicom and the Western NES turn up in competing designs. Even the ubiquitous NES Zapper turns up in



Photos by Samuel Thomas

fashion form. If that last sentence lost you, this might not be the brand for you. But elsewhere in the output, there's bound to be a reference that appeals, whether it be the red arm bands inspired by legendary avant-garde electronic act Yellow Magic Orchestra, or any number of on-the-nose nods to Star Wars. The eclectic mix of references is not only well-observed, but also well-executed. D-pads turn up as buttons, 8-bit characters are embroidered, and it just satisfies the craving to wear your subcultural affiliations in a way that any number of half-hearted collaborations and merchandise can't.

Shop visitors will discover the current graffiti and kung-fu themed collection on the racks, as well as some of the fixed items that turn up every season, including a particularly popular Game Boy-themed riding jacket, where

unbelievably the buttons, D-pad, and even speaker slits are included in the cut of the jacket. Those looking to get started can easily buy into the accessories, including energy power-up-themed studded bracelets; failing that, the snapbacks and headwear are an easy entry point. At the other end of the spectrum, while designer Morita likes to keep the label open to all—especially on the price—he does venture into one-offs and limited runs of more extreme items. A particular highlight is a Tetsuo (from manga *Akira*)-inspired shirt, where one sleeve seems to be mutating before your very eyes. Refreshingly, no matter where you look, you can feel the designer's sincere admiration for the source material in every last stitch.

If that has piqued your interest, you can find the brand online—but a visit to the Nakano store is truly recommended. Not only does it give you a chance to see the brand in its real cultural context, but it's also home to an ultra-rare original gacha machine from Cosmos, and a fully functional Street Fighter arcade machine, where I am currently 2-1 up on the designer. In essence, this is Nakano culture distilled in fashion form. And while an essential part of any subculture is hoping not too many people catch on, this is one brand for whom the big time is only a matter of time.

[www.thunder-box.jp](http://www.thunder-box.jp)







## FEATURED MOVIE

# PADDINGTON

**A**n anthropomorphic, marmalade-loving, talking bear—no one seems to be surprised by this—from “Darkest Peru” detains after a long journey in the title London railroad station, alone and friendless. He’s reluctantly given shelter—along with his iconic duffle coat and hat—by the Brown family (Hugh Bonneville and Sally Hawkins). Not all the neighbors are happy about this, and the film features a little subplot on the sociopolitical views of the citizenry, pro and con, toward

immigrants. There’s a nice underlying message of tolerance and acceptance. Ben Whishaw ably does the wee bear’s voice, and Nicole Kidman has fun as the villainess—a taxidermist, of course. Director Paul King’s mostly live-action, easy-going take on the children’s classic by Michael Bond is rich in incidental detail, wordplay, visual puns, and even Rube Goldberg concoctions, all delivered in an attitude of genial fun. A dollhouse that transforms into a cutaway set is only one of the film’s imaginative framing

devices. The plot machinations are musically explained by a Greek chorus that looks a lot like a wandering calypso band. Make no mistake: this is a kid flick, but so well done as to be hugely entertaining for parents. I think what lifts this sentimental but never artificial film above the usual cynical, effects-laden bombs aimed at children is its sheer modesty. The SFX used here get the job done, and delightfully; they are not the main attraction. This film respects your children. Bear hug. (95 min)



## AMERICAN ULTRA

An aimless stoner kills a pair of assassins using only a ramen spoon, and starts to display other skills he couldn’t possibly

have. Turns out he’s a newly activated CIA sleeper agent. What a great premise! Borne meets the bong! Someday, someone will make a hilarious, exciting movie out of it. But a clever conceit alone is not enough. Too light for an action movie and too serious for a stoner comedy; settles for Tarantino-lite. Performances by Jesse Eisenberg and Kristen Stewart are almost worth sitting through all the gratuitous bloodletting. Almost. Sporadically entertaining with a few awkward laughs. Japanese title: *Agent Ultra*. (96 min)



## BLACK MASS

After a string of misfires, Johnny Depp is back in the groove with this genuinely scary portrayal of legendary Boston

crime boss James “Whitey” Bulger. There’s still more to the actor than Wonka, Sparrow and Tonto. In 1975, FBI hotshot John Connolly (Joel Edgerton) had the bright idea of forming an unholy alliance with fellow Southie Bulger to help rid the city of the Italian mafia in return for a degree of immunity. It worked, but then they had this dead-eyed, psychopath rattlesnake to deal with. Not on a level with *The Departed* or *Goodfellas*, but nonetheless a solid gangster procedural. Japanese title: *Black Scandal*. (122 min)



## BRIDGE OF SPIES

True story of James B. Donovan, the insurance lawyer tasked with making sure Russian spy

Rudolf Abel got a fair trial—and deal with the ensuing odium for believing in the Constitution—and then with negotiating the 1962 swap of Abel for downed U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers. This unabashedly old-fashioned, slightly square, and thoroughly satisfying spy saga was meticulously crafted by Steven Spielberg (Capra meets Le Carré?), scripted by the Coen brothers, and stars Tom Hanks. What’s not to like? A high point for me was the magnificent, movie-anchoring, non-emotive performance by Mark Rylance as Abel. (141 min)





### THE CASE AGAINST 8

When California, of all states, passed a gay marriage ban called Proposition 8 in 2008, a dream team of legal and scholastic minds launched a five-year court battle to have it ruled unconstitutional. This is a dense, backstage legal procedural that filmmakers Ben Cotner and Ryan White have skillfully distilled into a clear, not to mention moving, narrative. The witness-demolishing lawyers (fascinating backstory) are great to watch, but the heroes are the two heavily vetted couples, one gay, one lesbian, that volunteered to be the plaintiffs, to bare their lives to abuse, threats, and worse, the media. A thoroughly engaging doc. Japanese title: *Gender Marriage*. (109 min)



### CRIMSON PEAK

Though marketed as a horror film, as one character describes its own source material, it's not so much a ghost story as a story with ghosts in it. In this swooning Gothic saga, Mia Wasikowska is an American heiress wooed and won by a creepy penniless aristocrat (Tom Hiddleston, a plot device) who, along with his equally creepy sister (Jessica Chastain, masterfully stretching her range as a hateful villainess) has a hidden agenda. The true star of any Guillermo del Toro film is the tactile production and costume design, and any story would take a back seat to these sumptuous visuals. But scary? No. (119 min)



### 5 FLIGHTS UP

Alex and Ruth (Morgan Freeman & Diane Keaton) can still manage the five flights of stairs to their Brooklyn condo, but it gets harder every day. So they're considering moving to an elevator building in Manhattan. As a succession of amusing New York-type prospective buyers parades through their open-house condo, they reflect back on when they bought the place four decades earlier, in less tolerant times. Undeniably warm and funny, but terribly slight. Bottom line: see this one for the terrific chemistry between these two veteran actors, and the pleasure of spending a little time in their company. Japanese title: *New York Nagame no li Heya Urimasu*. (92 min)



### IN THE HEART OF THE SEA

Bloated sea story from Ron Howard based on the 1820 sinking of the whaling ship *Essex*, which we're told was Herman Melville's (Ben Whishaw) inspiration for *Moby-Dick*. Not a bad History Channel look at the rigors of 19th-century whaling, if that floats your boat. But Howard resorts to voiceovers and other narrative shortcuts so he can get back to the computer-generated perils, so it's mostly spectacle over character. It felt false, with curiously little tension or suspense. The white whale gets only about six minutes' screen time. The rest is Chris Hemsworth standing around looking gorgeous. Japanese title: *Hakugei tonu Tataikai*. (122 min)



### IT FOLLOWS

I sift through numerous crappy horror movies for gems like this unpretentious yet highly effective flick that eschews the common horror tropes while scaring your socks off. There's little gore and few "boo" moments, but it ratchets up the tension and offers a continuous, nameless dread. The title pronoun refers to that shape-shifting entity ambling toward you with evil intent. Others can't see it. The only way to get rid of it is to "pass it on" through sex. Punctuated by a pulsing synth score, this supernatural stalker touches your subconscious. It will stay with you—it just won't leave you alone. (100 min)



### JOE

Nicolas Cage does so much crap these days that it's a surprise when he actually uses his immense talent. And his textured, rewarding performance here brings to mind *Leaving Las Vegas* and *Adaptation*. This is "southern rough" at its grittiest. Joe is a tightly wound ex-con with a heart of gold who runs a work crew. He's constantly struggling to restrain his more violent side, but he cares, and when he witnesses the abuse suffered by one of his new hires, an itinerant 15-year-old lad (Tye Sheridan—*Mud*), at the hands of his murderous father (a frightening Gary Poulter, cast from the streets!), he steps in. Japanese title: *Grand Joe*. (117 min)



### MONSTERS: THE DARK CONTINENT

If you're looking for some good monster-battling, give this one a miss. Oh, the monsters are there, originally designed and beautifully rendered, but they get only about 10 minutes' screen time in this two-hour-long, maudlin, overacted, and not very interesting sequel to the so-so 2010 film. It's as though first-timer Tom Green really, really wanted to make his, you know, deeper version of *The Hurt Locker*, but this creature feature was all he could land. So it's American soldiers tediously battling Middle Eastern insurgents with the almost forgotten title beings hovering on the horizon. Snore. Japanese title: *Monsters: Shinshu Shuurai*. (119 min)



### 99 HOMES

An unemployed single father (Andrew Garfield) goes to work for the very same reptilian real estate broker (a career-best Michael Shannon) who just a while ago tossed him, his mom (Laura Dern) and his kid out of their family home. The agent takes him under his wing, and soon he's the one doing the evicting. He starts to carry a gun. For a film about the financial crisis, this nail-biter plays like a thriller documentary, managing to address the issues while still being entertaining. Rather unsatisfying denouement, but this is a very good, heartbreakingly relevant, rabble-rousing twin character study. Japanese title: *Dream Home*. (112 min)



### THE PHYSICIAN

An 11th-century English barber's apprentice (Tom Payne) sets off for the Islamic East to study medicine under the learned healer Ibn Sina. To do this, he disguises himself as a Jew (self-circumcision scene a highlight). His dream is to bring a little light back to Dark Ages Merry Olde, a place that equated medicine with black magic. In his quest, he effectively battles sandstorms, plagues, superstition, and superfluous romantic subplots, but meets his match in the film's reductive stereotypes, general self-seriousness, and gaping plot holes. Ben Kingsley brings this up to watchable level—but only just. Japanese title: *Sennen Ishi Monogatari: Perusha no Kanata e*. (150 min)



### STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

Relax, it's nothing like those misbegotten prequels. True to the spirit of the 1977 original, almost to the point of seeming more like a remake than a sequel. Appealing new leads. Great seeing Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher back. Wonderfully self-aware, it knows it's a legacy movie. In a brilliant move, even the new young characters are fans of the historical deeds of Solo and Chewbacca. It's fun! J.J. Abrams has risen to the challenge. It is not, however, a masterpiece. A good film, like this one, delivers everything we want. But a great film brings us things we didn't even know we wanted. Cryptic, I am. Japanese title: *Star Wars: Force no Kakusei*. (135 min)



### SUITE FRANÇAIS

Respectfully adapted from the best-selling unfinished novel—just recently discovered—by Irène Némirovsky, who died in Auschwitz, this is the story of a romance between a married French woman (a headlining Michelle Williams) and an urbane, occupying Nazi officer, a composer before the war. This unashamedly soapy, charmingly mildewed blend of romance and suspense is narratively clumsy in spots and occasionally resorts to a totally unnecessary voiceover. But Williams's performance, expertly supported by Kristin Scott Thomas and Matthias Schoenaerts, makes this well worth a look. Japanese title: *France Kumikyoku*. (107 min)



### THE WALK

In 2008, James Marsh's fascinating *Man on Wire* documented Philippe Petit's legendary 1974 tightrope stroll between the WTC's 418-meter Twin Towers. All without permission. Now Robert Zemeckis brings his big-screen talents to the tale, giving us a sort of avant-garde mainstream caper flick, emphasizing the pure spectacle. A French-accented Joseph Gordon-Levitt is solid in the lead. Best of all, the photorealistic SFX, even the dizzying 3D, support the story, and there's good comic energy. Slow first hour compensated for by the sheer you-are-there-ness of the final 30 min. Big screen, please. Don't look down. (123 min)



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**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2016**

**1**  
SESSION

**2<sup>PM</sup> ~ 3<sup>PM</sup>**

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**3<sup>PM</sup> ~ 4<sup>PM</sup>**

### LECTURE

(45 min/Q&A 15 min)  
by a speaker with experience in starting a business

**2**  
SESSION

**3<sup>PM</sup> ~ 4<sup>PM</sup>**

### LECTURE

(45 min/Q&A 15 min)  
by a speaker with experience in starting a business

**4<sup>PM</sup> ~ 5<sup>PM</sup>**

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TOKYO  
METROPOLITAN  
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The cold weather of February is the perfect time to get inside the warmth of a theater and sample Scandinavian films in the **Tokyo Northern Lights Festival**, running February 6-12 at Shibuya's Eurospace (1-5 Maruyamacho, Shibuya-ku; [www.eurospace.co.jp](http://www.eurospace.co.jp)). One highlight is Swedish director Lukas Moodysson's coming-of-age pic *We Are the Best!* The winner of the top award at the 2013 Tokyo International Film Festival, it follows a trio of junior high school girls who form

a punk band in the early '80s. Other selections include *Trespassing Bergman*, a recent English-language documentary on Ingmar Bergman and the legendary director's 1953 work *Summer with Monika*, which introduced him to an international audience.

Not shying away from difficult topics, the **5th Death Penalty Movie Week** presents world films that deal with one of the toughest ethical questions. The works include the Belgian drama *The Son* by directors Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne,

Nagisa Oshima's 1968 masterpiece *Death by Hanging*, and a new documentary on boxer Iwao Hakamada, who spent nearly 48 years on death row. February 13-19 at Shibuya's Eurospace (1-5 Maruyamacho, Shibuya-ku; [www.eurospace.co.jp](http://www.eurospace.co.jp)).

The **Met Live Viewing** series continues to bring the best performances from the venerable New York opera to Tokyo movie theaters. Upcoming works include Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de perles* ("The Pearl Fishers") with German soprano Diana Damrau in the lead and running February 6-12. Puccini's *Turandot* led by Swede Nina Stemme screens February 27-March 4. Spring will see screenings of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* and *Madama Butterfly*. At Shinjuku Piccadilly (3-15-15 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku; [www.smt-cinema.com](http://www.smt-cinema.com)) and Toho Cinemas Roppongi Hills (6-10-2 Roppongi Minato-ku; [www.tohotheater.jp](http://www.tohotheater.jp)).

**The life of Florence Foster Jenkins**—a New York socialite who pursued an opera career despite a glaring lack of musical talent—is proving to be fertile grounds for cinema. The off-key singer is played by Meryl Streep in an upcoming biopic and also inspired the recent French film *Marguerite*, which transports the story to the cultural salons of 1920s Paris. Catherine Frot plays the delusional soprano, renamed Marguerite Dumont. On from mid-February at Cine Switch in Ginza (4-4-5 Ginza, Chuo-ku; [www.cineswitch.com](http://www.cineswitch.com)) and Yebisu Garden Cinema (4-20-2 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku; [www.unitedcinemas.jp/yebisu](http://www.unitedcinemas.jp/yebisu)).

EIGA

## PINK AND GREY

BY ROB SCHWARTZ

With the reported dissolution and reification of J-pop institution SMAP, this film couldn't come at a more opportune time. And it's based on a novel by a different idol from the same agency, the legendary Johnny & Associates. Shigeaki Kato, of the boy band NEWS, published the book on which this film is based, to much acclaim, in 2012. It's already been adapted into manga and now gets its turn on the silver screen. Unsurprisingly, it addresses the difficulties of celebrity and the dangers that go with it. Rengo (Yuto Nakajima) and Daiki (Masaki Suda) are childhood friends who share a love of acting. When they both become thespians, Rengo meets with huge success but Daiki toils in obscurity. Their friendship survives, but Rengo decides to take his own life and involves Daiki in the clean up. The story flashes back to how the two came



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to their careers and then, it turns out, Rengo's suicide provides an opening for Daiki's ascent. Director Isao Yukisada (*Crying Out for Love in the Center of the World*) is one of the finest auteurs working in Japan, and here he weaves an intricate

tale that switches perspectives—from color to black and white—and tones magnificently. Another thought-provoking and challenging work from a jewel of the current Japanese film scene. Japanese title: *Pink to Gray*. (118 min)





## PERFUME LIVE 3:5:6:9

BY C BRYAN JONES

One of the relatively few Japanese groups to make real headway outside of Asia is Perfume, the electro/EDM trio from Hiroshima. Thanks to the inclusion of their

song “Polyrhythm” in Pixar’s *Cars 2*, audiences in America and Europe are familiar with Perfume’s sound even if they don’t realize it. But more and more, they are realizing it, as evidenced by the packed houses in New York, L.A., and London during the group’s third world tour in November 2014.

This momentum built toward the event captured in January’s Blu-ray release *Perfume Anniversary 10days 2015 PPPPPPPPP LIVE 3:5:6:9*. 2015 marked 15 years since the group’s formation and 10 years since their major national debut. To honor the occasion, A-chan, Kashiyuka, and Nocchi appeared in a series of events between September 21 and October 7, spanning from Tsutaya O-West to Budokan to Hiroshima Green Arena.

As always, they made it more about the fans than themselves. Whereas the set list is normally crafted to flow seamlessly as a captivating presentation of sound and visuals, for LIVE 3:5:6:9 the set was chosen randomly by the roll of a giant 10-sided die, sometimes set into motion by the audience.

LIVE 3:5:6:9 was held on days five to 10, the first four being in Tokyo and the final two back home in Hiroshima. It was a grueling schedule that could explain one of the few blemishes to be found in this release: at times the girls look tired. Kashiyuka, in particular, lacks the energy she normally brings to the stage. It made me wonder if the frantic schedule was taking its toll. Watching the second disc, which is a complete digest of all 10 days, showing highlights of each, this does appear to be the case.

But this small blemish is no reason to skip what is an otherwise fun walk down memory lane with these three women—now 27 years old—who came together at the age of 11. The evolution of the group unfolds before your eyes as more recent tracks like “Pick Me Up” mingle with classics like “Twinkle Snow Powdery Snow.” The simpler routines from their teenage years look stiffer in their late 20s, while the current ones are an amazing feat of coordinated intricacy. To that end, the highlight of the set comes midway through in the form of “Story,” an as-yet-unreleased single that Perfume performed to an astonished audience last summer at SXSW in Austin, Texas. It’s pure artistry of both sight and sound.

The concert concludes with “Star Train,” a moving retrospective on where they’ve been and where they’re going. The crowd reaction moves A-chan to tears—as always—but that’s what’s so charming about Perfume. In an age where mega-agencies stick kids together to form groups of questionable talent propelled by the marketing machine, here are three 11-year-old girls who simply joined together, worked hard for a decade and a half, and are now reaping the rewards as adults.

**LIVE 3:5:6:9 out now.**



## DAVID BOWIE BLACKSTAR

BY LAURIER TIERNAN

From this album’s opening guitar and orchestral noodling, “the Master of Re-invention” in no way aimed for a return to the commercial dream of his *Let’s Dance* album, or even a hint at the comfort-in-the-familiar provided by his final live album. *Blackstar* flows torrentially, in the

only way the master would have had it: darker and deeper than his previous studio recording, *The Next Day*; as an answer to the question, “What kind of record would you create if you could only make one more?”

His much-beloved saxophone makes several prominent appearances, delivered by veteran jazz saxophonist Donny McCaslin, rather than by Mr. Bowie himself—whose style previous producer Nile Rodgers referred to as “fiercely untutored.”

Beats also stand out as paramount building blocks on this record. Long a champion of “black music”—to the point of dismissing one of his own albums as “plastic soul”—Bowie’s final recordings, while fiercely exploring the terrain between jazz and pop, anchor themselves solidly to strong kick and snare patterns; from Barry White-style classics, to cutting-edge EDM beats rendered through analog sources. And, in complete contrast to the expansive track listing of his previous studio album, *Blackstar* offers only half its number of compositions. Focus favors brevity, and this record will not be disliked for a lack of concision.

Many critics have speculated that David Bowie knew this would be his last album, and that he was aiming to produce a record which would sum up, like all of his albums did, the essence of his perspective at that time. Much like on Queen’s *Innuendo*, that near-death perspective produced a daringly progressive track—the album’s eponymous single—as well as other songs whose full meaning may never be grasped by the general public.

Lyrically, David Bowie’s 25th studio album wasted no time pandering to commercial clichés, and often even dispensed with the artifices of rhyming and meter. Keeping to the mission at hand, themes of parting, death, and the afterlife are recurrent. Do those factors make *Blackstar* jarring to listen to? They do, but the poignancy of all these factors alchemically fuse to produce artistic gold.

Fittingly though, for an artist who so loved his audience, he opened the album’s final song with a gentle orchestral arrangement and pop-song structure reminiscent of his *Labyrinth* days. Still, while baring his soul as he stared death down, Mr. Bowie remained the artist steeped in a love of the arcane. As the final song on his final album came to a close, he delved deeper into poetry, before concluding, “I can’t give everything away.”

He should not have, and he did not. Thank you very much, Starman.  
**Blackstar out now.**





# WHAT THE FUNDAY?

Rock radio power trio on FM's bleak future in Japan

BY DAN GRUNEBAUM

**M**Cs George, Mike, and Taro are one of Japanese radio's most enduring—and irreverent—lineups. For years, they've hosted different rock shows on Inter-FM, becoming a turn-to source in Japan for new music by breaking acts. *Metropolis* heard from producer Mike Rogers about their current show *What The Funday?* and their battles against the dire state of FM radio in Japan.

## How did you come to host a rock radio show in Japan?

I started in 1980 as an assistant for Rodney on the Roq at KROQ Los Angeles. As a team, we've been doing this since 1994 or so. I wrote a planning sheet for a rock program and turned it in to several radio stations. It was a plan for radical radio that was like the rock programs I loved as a kid. When I was a teenager, I'd actually rush home and turn the radio on so that I could tune in to certain programs.

## What are the main differences between rock radio in Japan and overseas?

Japanese radio today is like American AM radio in the 1940s and 1950s; they still have block programming, which means you can tune into a station at different times and hear completely different types of music. For example, at 5pm

they're playing rock music; at 8pm, they are playing jazz. Or, they're playing the Japanese version of the "Hit Parade [from] Hell" that you see on all those big screens at Shibuya Crossing, which consists of teenybopper boy and girl bands. Of course, being a "musicologist," I give those Japanese idol groups "two thumbs up!" ... yeah, two thumbs up to gouge my eyes out so that I don't have to see them anymore.

## Tell us about the dynamic between you three and what keeps you together.

I have been George Williams' agent for nearly 25 years. It has been my job to find him good show-business gigs, but to also make jobs that help him keep a cool image, and to keep him—for lack of a better term—the leader in new music. Taro joined into a show called *Channel G* in 1996, and it just clicked from there. The show has continued under different names and times, but it's basically the same show—brand-new music aired before anyone else in Japan. I see George Williams as the Jon Stewart of the show, and Taro and I are the crazy reporters who bring in stuff from deep outfield.

## Tell us how the current program has evolved.

The shows basically all have the same plan: no script, and we talk about real things and what is happening now. Japanese radio is so full of nonsense conversations. Why do I have to do like 99 percent of the shows and ask people questions like, "What is your favorite bento?"

## To what extent do you select your own material? How much is format-driven?

I select most of the music, but the guys sometimes help out too. I try to pick at least 10-12 brand-new underground artists that are

## WHAT THE FUNDAY?

# MIKE ROGERS' TOP 6 JAPANESE ROCK BANDS

## The Neatbeats

The Japanese Beatles. Hilariously awesome entertainment.

## The Privates

The Japanese Buzzcocks. Been around for 30 years and still kicking it.

## The 50 Kaitenz

These guys are Japan's funniest and most entertaining punk band.

## Su&ko D&koi

Pronounced "sutoko dokkoi." Brand-new

Tokyo girl-punk trio. Imagine if NOFX were a group of cute Japanese girls who also happened to be awesome musicians.

## The Routes

A band from Kyushu ... that is fronted by a *gaijin*. Getting tons of airplay all around the world! In Japan? Only on my show.

## Taffy

Awesome Tokyo band. Shoegazer and '90s Britpop better than the Brits could ever do.

happening in the U.K., America, or even Japanese indies to air every week. Most of the bands we play fade into oblivion, but I can brag that we were the first to play many acts in Japan before they became big. The most famous of [these] were Amy Winehouse and The White Stripes.

## What kind of rock are young Japanese interested in these days?

Young Japanese people don't really listen to rock music; they listen to EDM. Just go to something like Fuji Rock or even your local rock club; you will see very few 20-somethings in the audience these days.

## How do you see the future of FM radio in Japan?

In April, I started working on a project for Nico Nico Douga [Japan's YouTube]. The show we made, *Ninja Slayer*, had over 10 million views in six months. I took that job because I could see the writing on the wall. At a meeting with one of Japan's biggest publishers, they presented data on viewing and listening habits.

I was shocked. Of over 20,000 Japanese youth between 16 and 28, only 11 percent had a TV in their bedroom; a mere 5.6 percent had an FM radio. An astounding 97 percent had a smart device. When I was a kid, I would sneak [into] bed and listen to the radio. Kids today snuggle up with their iPhone and watch the videos and music they want to watch; today's young people do not listen to the radio.

So when people under 30 don't care about you, what [does] your future look like? We're witnessing the slow-motion train wreck of FM radio in Japan. Just like the big Japanese TV stations, unless something is done to focus on a target market, there is no way they can survive in their current configuration.



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# BO-PEEP

The women-led J-rock group aren't sheep

BY DAN GRUNEBAUM

**B**ands come and go, but some manage to show remarkable staying power. One such group is Bo-Peep, who along with acts like Lolita No.18 and Seagull Screaming Kiss Her Kiss Her are among a number of women-led Japanese alt-rock bands to have had an outsized impact on foreign fans in recent decades.

The trio celebrated its 15th year by releasing *Thank You*, which indomitable singer Mika Yoshimura explains is their thank-you letter to listeners for supporting the band over a decade and a half.

The album sees the band with a new (male) bassist and a fresh member of the extended family in the form of drummer Ryoko Nakano's newborn child, who appeared as the band took an extended break following the release of its last album *Vibe* five years ago.

*Thank You* doesn't waste any time getting straight to the goods. The opener, "Hello," is a

greasy slab of two-chord punk underpinned by Nakano's industrial-strength drums, Yoshimura's vocals squealing above the whole affair.

Following that is "Renso Game," a shaggy, leering affair that shines the light on new bassist Yuki Sujaku. After years as an all-girl trio, Yoshimura explains that previous bassist Kaori "Take" Takebayashi had to exit Tokyo for her hometown. She apparently happened across Sujaku at a bar and, taken with his performance, invited him to join the band.

The third and title track takes Bo-Peep into more melodic territory, but it's only a detour on a road of pleasantly unsettling drum and guitar riffs and chunky funk-punk. As another song insists, the basic ethos is "Let's Go Bananas!"

But as uncompromising as their recorded music is, Bo-Peep really have to be appreciated live, where the full-force of Yoshimura's rock god personality has enough space for

expression; she's been known to break a bone or two jumping around on stage.

The band are a favorite overseas and have performed at Austin's vaunted South By Southwest festival twice, most recently in 2015.

Back home, they can be found haunting dive-y live houses like Heaven's Door in Sangenjaya and Club 251 in Shimokitazawa.

Bo-Peep can be seen as poster girls for long-lived yet noncommercial Japanese rock bands who manage to exert a strong international pull while providing a stringent counterpoint to the overdose of *kawaii* "idol" acts that Japan's talent factories continue to churn out. But for Yoshimura and Nakano, there is no master plan for feminist global domination. "We just continue to rock hard," Yoshimura says about the new album, "and throw in a few pop twists."

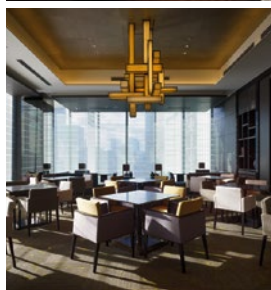
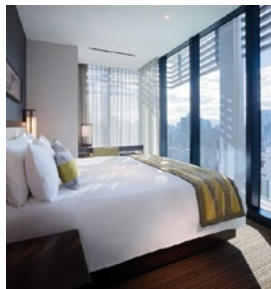
**Roppongi Club Edge, Feb 12 and Sangenjaya Heaven's Door, Feb 14.** <http://bo-peep3.com>



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## EFN IV TRYOUTS

Fight the good fight starting Feb 7

Everyone needs a constructive outlet for stress. Life as an executive in Tokyo can take its toll on the best of us but, with guidance, that pressure can be turned into something wonderful. That's the idea behind the Tony Evans and deVere Group Executive Fight Night (EFN).

Originally conceived of as a way to release tension, EFN has become a fundraising juggernaut for some of the city's most important charities. And that's part of the magic.

We're often urged to fight for a good cause, but rarely is the imperative so literal. Those who've felt the generosity of EFN are certainly glad that, in this case, it is.

"We started Executive Fight Night to provide stressed-out Tokyo executives an avenue to get fit and test themselves—and to provide great entertainment," explained Dave Thomas, who founded EFN together with Eddie Nixon and Nathan Schmid in 2012. "But we also wanted to give back to the community and tap into the generous spirit of Tokyoites. So the money that's been raised has gone to several very worthwhile charities, which gives us enormous satisfaction."

Those worthwhile charities include Refugees International Japan, Shine On! Kids and Run for the Cure, a Japan-based breast cancer organization. Collectively, groups supported by organizer Ginja Ninja have received over ¥35 million to date as a result of the bouts.

Charities aren't the only ones who benefit: Another part of the magic is how EFN helps those who slip on the gloves. When the fighters take center stage at the Grand Hyatt, it's the culmination of months of preparation. One of the pillars of the event is fitness, and those destined for the ring undergo a 12-week "Boxing Bootcamp" at Club 360. Over the course of the program, they get into top shape and learn how to fight like a pro.

Metropolis' own Kaoru Nakashima took part in Executive Fight Night II in 2013. Describing his decision to step into the ring, the hard-working sales executive said, "This is the kind of experience that many people can't have. As I had never done boxing before, doing new sports is a challenge." And while the process was indeed challenging, it was also rewarding. Thanks to the support of trainers at Club 360, Nakashima was able to carve out time and learn new skills. "I felt like a professional fighter when I got into the ring," he said. "And my participation supports charity. That is a good thing!"

The big event is set for May 20 at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo ballroom. Tryouts will be held at 8am on Sunday, February 7 at Club 360. So if you want to step up for a good cause, there's still time to take your battles from the boardroom to the ring.

**Executive Fight Night VI Tryouts. Feb 7, 8am. Club 360, Motoazabu, Minato-ku. 〓 Roppongi. Visit <http://executivefightnight.com/partici-pate/> or contact EFN at [info@ginjaninjas.com](mailto:info@ginjaninjas.com) or 03-6434-9667 to reserve your spot.**



# THE LANGUAGE ARCHIVE

Exploring communication and love on stage

BY MARTIN LEROUX

**T**he Tokyo International Players' upcoming production of *The Language Archive* poses an interesting question: How do you say love? The acclaimed play by Los Angeles playwright Julia Cho explores the ostensibly simple yet sometimes painfully complex nature of communication. The story finds a language archivist—a master of several tongues—watching his marriage crumble as a result of his inability to express his love to his wife. *Metropolis* talks to Brian Berdanier, director of *The Language Archive*, which is performed for the first time ever in Japan this February.

## Please tell us a bit about yourself.

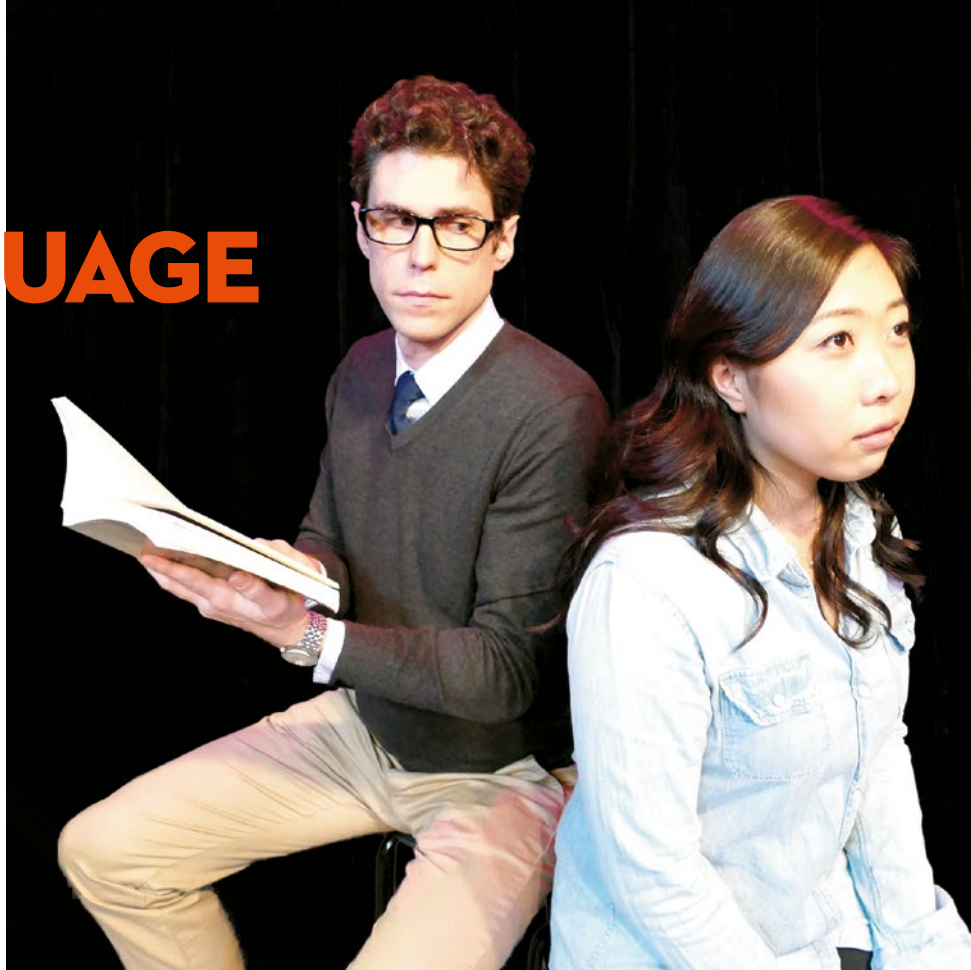
I am a teacher, actor, and director originally from the lush and lovely Rogue Valley of southern Oregon, USA, but have spent most of my adult life abroad, mostly in Japan, with multiple stints in France for grad school.

## How did you get involved with theater?

I somehow stumbled into a musical theater troupe in high school, which I absolutely loved. It was a typical case of theater becoming the “safe space” for a gangly, effeminate boy who hated sports. In university I studied classical voice, and for a while thought I was going to be an opera singer ... but I lacked discipline. Fortunately, opera turned me on to foreign languages and literature, which have now become a day job that allows plenty of time for me to scratch my lingering theatrical itch as a performer and director.

## What about *The Language Archive* drew you to directing it?

I'm a huge fan of Julia Cho's writing and have been in love with this award-winning script since I first read it nearly five years ago. Cho is a young writer known for tackling some pretty serious



Photos by Rodger Sonomura

issues in her plays, but always with a unique voice that manages to home in on moments of humor and even lightness in the face of melancholy. There's a heartfelt, earnest sort of energy radiating from the pages of a Julia Cho script that is magical and quite captivating.

## What about the themes of communication and the expression of love resonates with people?

They resonate because they're universal! They're life! Who among us has never been misunderstood? Never suffered a broken heart? Never seen a relationship go sour? These are huge themes that everyone can recognize, that have made for great storytelling.

## The Tokyo international theater community comprises people of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. How does that contribute to this production?

It's true that we have a very multilingual, multicultural cast and crew: nearly a dozen different nationalities! While rather typical for a TIP production, such diversity has been useful in helping bring this particular show from “page to stage,” in that we are all attuned to issues of language and communication—not to men-

tion miscommunication!—in a way that a more homogenous group of artists might not be.

## What has been the most rewarding aspect of directing this production so far?

The most rewarding aspect has been working with a cast of actors whom I love and respect very much. There are some incredibly talented people on that stage! I only hope the experience has been equally gratifying for them.

## What do you hope audiences take away from the show?

As sappy as it sounds, I sort of hope audiences leave the show wanting to tell their loved ones how they feel. Sometimes all we have are words. Sometimes that's enough.

## Finally, in your own words—and to turn the play's tagline back to you: how many ways can you say “love”?

Ah, but therein lies the secret of the tagline! “How do you say love?” can mean many things, depending on one's tone of voice and which word one chooses to emphasize. As a matter of fact, we've spent a huge amount of time in rehearsal pulling apart this seemingly simple little phrase. How do we say love? I encourage everyone to come see the show and count the ways!

**Tokyo International Players present the Japan premiere of *The Language Archive*. Feb 25-28, various times. Nakano Pocket Square, 3-22-8 Nakano, Nakano-ku. ☎ Nakano. [www.tokyo-players.org](http://www.tokyo-players.org)**





# BEYOND OBSCURE AT BEEP AKIHABARA

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY SAMUEL THOMAS

Even as the older pessimists of Akihabara bemoan the area selling out to tourists, the backstreets continue to pump out authentic Akiba culture at a relentless pace. If you know where to look, the scene is very much alive and always ready to put the spring back into the step of even the most jaded fan. One of the newest openings, Akihabara Beep, is particularly appropriate for this purpose, shining the spotlight on the computer scene that many old-timers came to Akihabara for in its formative years.

Oddly enough, despite the Japanese retro-console scene being well-known abroad since the 1980s, the computer gaming scene never quite made the jump. Understandable, really, as it's one thing to import a

single self-contained box, but another to get a computer out of Japan back in the day—especially with all the operating systems, cables, adapters, and controllers required. Not to mention the sheer cost of the shipping.

However, that means many gamers are missing out on a huge part of Japanese gaming history. Many of the cult series have their origin on computer formats. Gaming history took interesting tangents such as the MSX from Microsoft Japan that really took off in East Asia by bridging the gap between console and computer, and was the original home of Konami's Metal Gear Solid series. At any rate, no matter your level of interest, it's exciting to know that, even in an age when gaming history seems to be well-archived and available on smartphones, there are still depths left to explore, games to discover, and even entire systems the most dedicated gamers have yet to experience.

Visitors to the underground bunker that houses Beep will be greeted by banks of humming computers and systems set up and ready to be played completely for free. There's a regularly rotating lineup of games, so you can see what you might have been missing out

on. There are refurbished, tested, and even brand-new consoles and computers to take home if your wallet allows—but Beep operates as a museum first and a shop second. Some of the rarer games set up for playing are notoriously difficult, so the shop has produced its own guidebooks in lieu of anything







official. The idea is that if the customer can't afford to buy into the system wholesale, they can pick up the guide, still experience everything the game has to offer, and then come back next month to explore a whole different game, as intended, on the original hardware.

Beyond the obscurities of the computer

world—FM Towns, anyone?—the store also gets to grips with the extremities of the arcade world, taking turns to push the output of different game makers that people might not be quite familiar with. Currently, they're tackling the rarer entries in Data East's back catalog, ready to be enjoyed on Beep's own cabinets.

But if you want to build your own arcade cab at home, then you're more than welcome to do so. Beep offers their own range of custom boards to get you started for a pretty minimal buy-in, including setups mindful of the constraints smaller homes might present, that

allow you to directly hook up Jamma arcade boards to a standard TV and use console controllers instead of arcade sticks.

However, the serious collectors will head straight to the showcases, where Beep proves they're capable of going a step beyond the average retro game shop. Whereas their Akihabara rivals might have a copy of the holy grail of any PC engine collection, Darius Alpha, on the shelves, Beep has it sealed with a letter from the producer. Their shelves are positively heaving with items that aren't just about the game, but also the culture that goes with it. Some of the games' creators themselves have visited the store to leave signed messages of astonishment that such items have been located after all these years.

But don't worry: even if the rarities sell, the shop continues its duty as a museum by cataloguing the items for its own in-house publication, having already produced guides to the history of Japanese PC gaming, and even foreign consoles that never made it to the Japanese market.

**Beep. 3-9-8 Sotokanda, Chiyoda-ku. Due to store policy, customers under 18 are prohibited. [www.akihabara-beep.com](http://www.akihabara-beep.com)**







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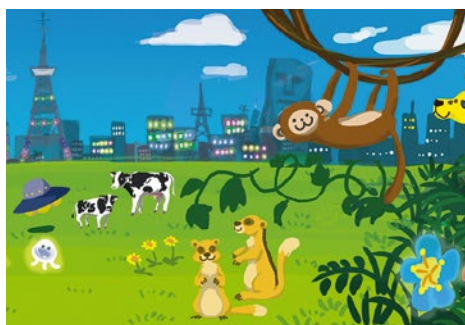
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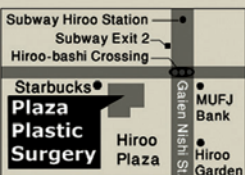
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
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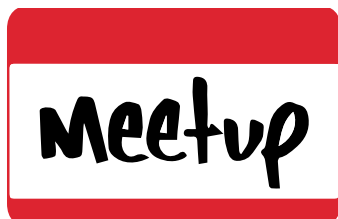
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## BEAUTY BY ALEXANDRE

Alexandre started as a hairstylist and color specialist for blondes and brunettes in Paris 25 years ago. He moved to New York, and worked in Manhattan for more than 10 years at an upscale hair salon. For many years, he worked in the fashion industry for movies and TV ("VH1 Behind the Music," CBS News, etc.), fashion shows (Lanvin, Nautica, etc.) and photography (Vanity Fair, Teen People, etc.), moving between Paris and New York, and now, Tokyo. He also specializes in make-up and body painting, and can provide make-up workshops for small groups at private homes. Alexandre understands that sometimes, people are unable to visit salons for cuts and styling, and so he is happy to make house-calls. By appointment only at home or at Lizerio in Omotesando. **090-3520-6262 [www.bba-japan.com](http://www.bba-japan.com)**



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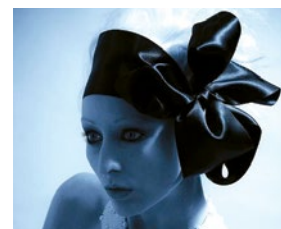
Free Orientation Session Apr 3. MBSR is a systematic and intensive training in mindfulness meditation and other simple tools that can help you manage stress and discover your own reserve of inner peace. Starting Apr 10, the course will help you integrate mindfulness into your daily life through 26.5 hours of direct instruction, practical homework assignments, and ongoing support over nine weekly sessions. This MBSR course is modeled on the program developed by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn at the UMass Stress Reduction Clinic, where it has been completed by more than 22,000 people since 1979. **[tokyostressreduction@gmail.com](mailto:tokyostressreduction@gmail.com) [www.tokyostressreduction.org](http://www.tokyostressreduction.org) 080-3662-7844**



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## SILVA PAPILO

English-speaking hairdresser Chie confers with her clients to help create the style they want, advising them on issues such as hair texture, color balance, and how facial structure and hairstyle will influence their overall "look." Chie, who specializes in ombre and blonde highlights, has extensive experience, which has resulted in her being recognized within the industry as an expert in total creative beauty styling. Featured in well-known publications like *GQ*, *ID*, *FHM*, and *Vogue*, she was even recommended by *Harper's Bazaar Australia* as the best hairstylist in Tokyo. **2F Galeria Harajuku, 3-6-1 Sendagaya, Shibuya-ku. 03-6434-5219. [contact@silvapapilio.com](mailto:contact@silvapapilio.com). Closed Monday and 3rd Sunday of the month. [silvapapilio.com](http://silvapapilio.com)** 



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Grace Buchele Mineta is an author who blogs and draws comics about her daily life in Japan at [www.HowIBecameTexan.com](http://www.HowIBecameTexan.com).

HOROSCOPE  
BY CATHRYN MOE

♥ Love ♣ Money ♠ Luck

**ARIES**  
Mar 21-Apr 20 ♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

There's a fantasy quality to this month, which you may try to turn into reality. While it is real, it's stopping by to check things out, then move to its next assignment. You have several options: you can live with changeability and go with the flow, or you can check in with yourself as to your next step. Finally, you can focus on Valentine's Day not going by in the blink of an eye. Prepare to be loved—immensely.

**TAURUS**  
Apr 21-May 21 ♥♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

You have a clean slate in February. It's your choice to drop whatever was holding you back, and just plunge in. Seeing yourself differently than you have before is the key. Valentine's Day is definitely your play, as you're a hearts-and-roses romantic deep down. Your ruling planet Venus connects with Pallas Athene and Mercury to make something wonderful happen in the realm of the unexpected. Are you ready?

**GEMINI**  
May 22-Jun 21 ♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

With your ruling planet Mercury moving from your solar eighth to ninth house, your focus lifts and takes off. You're naturally able to rise above, so this is quite a stellar view. February gives you time to make plans that take you away from the moment-to-moment rush. For you, Valentine's Day is more about what makes the whole world sing, or at least, whomever and whatever makes your world whole.

**CANCER**  
Jun 22-Jul 23 ♥♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

February is a wonderful month for Cancers, but you may find it changeable. That's because there are some happy tricksters stirring it up for you. Venus, Mercury, and Pallas Athene work to create what you like most. Their goal is to bring you a level of comfort you hadn't thought of, focusing on responsibilities as you do. Enjoy Valentine's Day. Make it your own!

**LEO**  
Jul 24-Aug 23 ♥♥♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

Valentine's Day is in February, but you win the hearts of admirers all year round. There's something about Leos that helps people smile with confidence. With Venus, Mercury, and Pallas Athene all riding in your relationship sector, an unconventional partner may bring out your jungle lion. Tired of an old paradigm that never really worked? Create your own mode, as that's exactly what this month has in mind.

**VIRGO**  
Aug 24-Sep 23 ♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

Open your heart and give it wings. February holds a point where what you no longer need flows away, and what you cherish most stays. Romance isn't just on Valentine's Day, either. Though you'll want to make arrangements or book that table with hearts on your mind, your awareness becomes a new point of departure. Ceres connects with Neptune, which makes it a fantasy month, especially for you.

**LIBRA**  
Sep 24-Oct 23 ♥♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

This is a lovely month for Librans. Don't miss it! Venus, Mercury, and Pallas Athene sail through your solar fifth house, opening all kinds of venues for your perusal. For the most part, February is a hearts-and-flowers, romantic, and Valentine's Day kind of connection. You'll hear all kinds of news and choose your own original response. Another thing: you'll be more comfortable when you leave than when you arrived.

**SCORPIO**  
Oct 24-Nov 22 ♥♥♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

There's a swing in your step that surprises the early winter mornings. February has more light than dark for you, which brings a chance to catch your breath, and breathe in the fresh air you may be craving. You have a chance to see what's around you, and find time to enjoy it. As a metaphor, stellar influences open darkened galaxies that have long captured your curiosity. Portals of light are available for you.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Nov 23-Dec 22 ♥♥♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

Even if you think you've tried everything, February will show you there's more to discover. This is delightful for Sagittarians, who tend to always be up for an adventure. Luckily, you're in a great flow. Venus is at her best as she connects you up effortlessly, putting you in a position to receive financial rewards. A more beautiful surrounding and a chance to take time out for yourself round out the joys that find you.

**CAPRICORN**  
Dec 23-Jan 20 ♥♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

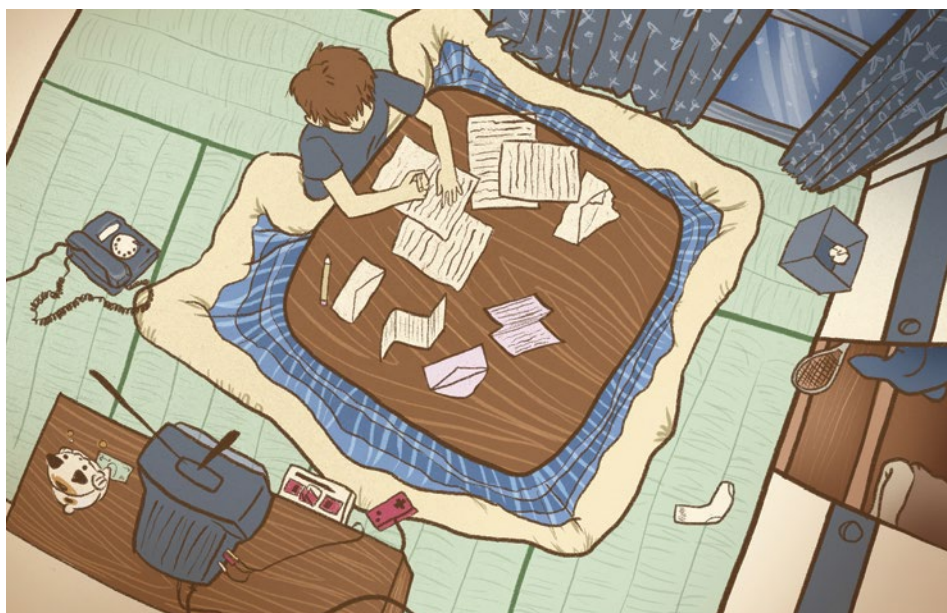
February holds wonderful welcome moments for you, Capricorn. Venus connects with Pluto in your sign, bringing love and understanding through your airwaves. You live on a deeper, more sustainable level. Then this goddess planet zooms off to your money house, making sure innovations and worthwhile curiosities find their way into your bank account. Now, that's something worth sticking around for!

**AQUARIUS**  
Jan 21-Feb 19 ♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

Once in your element, you're now even more sure you've spent your time in the best way possible. February brings breakthroughs to Aquarius, with your birthday a big part of your new awareness. Thus a big Happy Birthday is due! You won't drift as this month goes by, you'll pick up speed. If you enjoy making your goals the lights they truly are, you'll reap heart-warming rewards that restore and refresh you.

**PISCES**  
Feb 20-Mar 20 ♥♥♥♥ ♣♣♣♣

Edit, delete, segue, extend. You have all the abilities and can make all the plays. Your finesse this month appeals to others, bringing backers and admirers. They'll keep you in their radar as you experiment with what intrigues you most. Keeping your interests intact, February is the month you expand without having to try too hard. It's as if things fall into place, although you dreamed them into being long ago.



**LETTER-WRITING IN THOSE DAYS WAS AKIN TO PUTTING YOUR PRESENT LIFE IN A TIME CAPSULE AND SENDING IT BACK TO YOUR HOMETOWN."**

etiquette of formal letter-writing. Instant messaging that enabled "chatting" didn't really take off either, until around the new millennium ... if memory serves correctly.

No, in those dark days of the early '90s, if you wanted to contact someone and phoning wasn't an option, you had to write a letter.

"What's a letter?" my nephew asks.

"Letters were handwritten or typed pieces of communication that people used to send in envelopes using the postal service. You would write your message down on paper, fold it neatly, then put it into an envelope which you would lick and ..."

"Lick?"

"Yes, you licked the envelope to seal it."

"Eww. That doesn't sound very hygienic."

"I don't suppose it does."

Letter-writing in those days was akin to putting your present life in a time capsule and sending it back to your hometown. I recall writing in one of my earlier letters that I was broke, hungry, and lonely; and wanted to go home.

Two months later a reply came: "Sorry to hear that things in Japan aren't as good as you were expecting. I've included a check for a hundred dollars ..."

I quickly replied that all was now going like a dream. I had a new girlfriend who was wonderful and had gotten a few extra gigs to supplement my income, so money was pretty good.

"P.S. I'm returning your voided check—can't cash American checks in Japan. Thanks for the thought, anyways."

Another three months would pass and I would get a letter that said, "Glad to hear everything's going swimmingly for you!"

And I would reply, "My girlfriend has left me. My boss is threatening to sack me. I've never been so depressed in all my life. I want to die."

And so on.

Nowadays, with smartphones, social networking sites, and video calling, the life of the expat or traveler is more convenient, the planet far less lonely—even when you're separated by 6,000 miles from family and friends. Unfortunately, it's also a lot less adventurous.

■ Aonghas Crowe is an author, blogger, and translator; find him online at [www.aonghascrowe.com](http://www.aonghascrowe.com)

## F.O.B. AND A-OK!

Looking back at the life of an expat—20 years ago

BY AONGHAS CROWE



One of my nephews arrived in Japan last week and stayed with me for several days before moving on to Okayama, where he will spend the next eight months as an assistant language teacher. His visit reminded me of the days when I myself first came to this country, back in the spring of '92. Let me tell you, things couldn't be more different today.

Whereas friends and family are now only a text message or video call away on a device that fits nicely in your back pocket—and free of charge, to boot—in the dark days of the early '90s, cutting-edge communications were only marginally better than training a passel of homing pigeons to carry messages.

For starters, international phone calls were not only prohibitively expensive in those days, but could only be made from certain phones. Even if you had the wherewithal to buy the

rights to a landline, which could set you back as much as ¥80,000 (\$800), phoning home usually involved entering into a contract agreement with one of a handful of companies that enabled overseas calling. And though the connection was generally good—you really did sound like you were next door—a single phone call could cost upwards of a hundred dollars or more. Most expats had to rely on dedicated public phone booths if they wanted to call home. Even these were limited in number.

Living in a sleepy suburb of Kitakyushu City at the time, I would have to first walk 20 minutes to the station and ride the train for about 10 minutes to the neighboring town of Kurosaki where two "international" phone booths stood like sentinels outside the station. Armed with several prepaid telephone cards, I would dial my parents and hope against hope that they were home and awake when I called.

If you asked me when the last time I made an international call was, I couldn't tell you. Modern technology has made that landline I paid good money for practically obsolete. Oh, it makes for a nice toy for my two-year-old son who likes how it pings and rings and plays music when people are on hold; but that's about it.

As for e-mail ... well, hardly anyone had yet heard of it in '92. I myself didn't get dial-up internet service until the mid-'90s, when I coughed up about ¥250,000 for a clunky Macintosh LC 520 Performa with five megabytes of memory! Even with the new-fangled technology, there was only a scattering of acquaintances I was able to contact through the pneumatic tubes of the World Wide Web. It wasn't until later in that decade that e-mail really started to spread, and even then people still used it with all the





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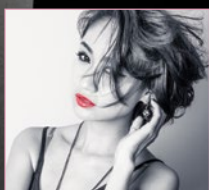
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